Assessing the Determinants of Mamak Restaurant Customer Satisfaction

Ernest K. S. Lim

Taylor's Business School / Taylor's University
Subang Jaya, Selangor 47500/ Malaysia

Abstract

This study aims to explore the determinants of Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. Survey questions were distributed to the respondents that frequently patron of Mamak restaurants. Pearson correlation and multiple regression were being employed to determine the relationship between environment, food quality, service quality of Mamak restaurant and customer satisfaction. Findings showed that there was a positive relationship between environment, food quality, service quality of Mamak restaurant and customer satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis showed that customers felt satisfied if restaurant owners served quality food and provided excellent services to its customers. This study indicated that restaurant's environment didn't bring any impact to customer satisfaction.

Keywords: environment, food quality, service quality, Mamak restaurant, customer satisfaction

1. Introduction

The term Mamak describes people of Tamil Muslims origin who are living in Malaysia. Hence, Mamak restaurant means restaurant run by these Indian Muslims where several popular foods are served such as rice served with curries and side dishes, tossed bread, milk tea, naan and etc. This food is indulged in curry or dhall based gravy. Mamak restaurants are mushrooming in Malaysia and these restaurants are well-accepted by locals and foreigners that provide different kinds of dining experience (Ramly, Ahmad & Ahmadin, 2004).

Customer satisfaction was a customer's perception of the performance of a product or service (Bowden & Dagger, 2011). Hence, the most widely accepted theory for customer satisfaction is called Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory. This theory means customers will compare actual experiences or performances with their expectations to evaluate their satisfaction levels. As a result, the restaurants' customers will decide whether their predetermined expectations have been met or not by evaluating

aspects that are related to both food and services (Jangga, Sahari & Basir, 2012). This explanation of theory on customer satisfaction is based on the emotional process of expectations confirmation by the customers (Oliver, 1989). Customer satisfaction reflects customer's feeling of the service providers. Degree of consumer's fulfillment could be classified either pleasant or unpleasant experiences (Oliver, 1997). It is significant to consider customers' affective responses as customers interact with service providers. Thus, customer satisfaction is viewed as cognitive evaluations of food quality and service quality and atmosphere aspects that are aroused by consumption experiences (Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007).

Environment of a restaurant plays an important role in customer satisfaction. According to Namasivayam & Matilla (2007), before the customers experience the actual food or service outputs by the restaurants, environmental elements would influence customer satisfaction. So, tangible elements will be used by customers as cues for the expected quality level before actual consumption behaviors occur (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1993). Atmosphere can be defined as an effort to create buying environments to enhance certain emotional buying behavior. Atmosphere could be a marketing strategy to enhance consumption behaviors (Kumar, Garg & Rahman, 2010). The relationship between psychological responses to atmosphere and consumer behaviors has been studied by researchers (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001).There are several aspects of atmosphere such as ambience, cleanliness, colors, furnishings, layout, lighting and style (Countryman & Jang, 2006; Ha & Jang, 2012)

Food quality is one of the most crucial elements for dining experience (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Quality food is referred to freshness, taste and well-presentation of food. There are some influential food quality factors such as the presentation and taste of the food (Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012). Ha and Jang (2012) suggested that the most important element for

food quality is variety of food. Some empirical studies showed that the usefulness of food quality for restaurants such as food quality is a key factor to decide whether to patron the restaurant (Susskind & Chan, 2000). Food quality would be the most important attribute for customer satisfaction when compared to other elements of restaurants such as service quality and environmental conditions (Sulek & Hensley, 2004).

Likewise, service quality is considered as an important determinant that drives customer satisfaction. There are two dimensions of service quality: the cognitive evaluation by customers on the service (Taylor & Baker, 1994); followed by an evaluation of attribute performance (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1998). The customer's judgment of the overall superiority or excellence of the service can be used to define service quality. Hence, customers evaluate subjectively by comparing actual performances and expectations (Bolton & Drew, 1991).

Previous studies showed that food and service quality in restaurant had significant impacts on customers' satisfaction (Olsen, 2002). Higher levels of customers' satisfaction could be achieved by providing high quality service and subsequently led to recommendation of the restaurants to others (Chow, Lau, Lo & Yun, 2007). Food quality is a fundamental factor that affects restaurant customers' satisfaction (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 2000). Besides, restaurant operators have to create a pleasant atmosphere to their customers. Customers perceived the atmosphere of the restaurants before any services. These atmospheric elements include color, design, layout, music and scent of the restaurant. This atmospheric perception would eventually affect customer satisfaction (Bitner, 1990).

Customer expectation on the food and service quality would be higher if they had a positive perception of the atmosphere of the restaurants. Likewise, customer satisfaction could be met if restaurant provided marvelous food and services to its customers. (Ha & Jang, 2010). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of environment, food quality and service quality towards Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. The hypotheses are as follows:
•There is a linear relationship between environment and Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction.
•There is a linear relationship between food quality and Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction.
•There is a linear relationship between service quality and Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction.

•A significant portion of the variation in the Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction is explained by the linear model of environment, food quality and service quality.

2. Methodology

This study used quantitative approach in analyzing its data. The questionnaires were distributed to 162 target respondents in Malaysia. Respondents were required to answer all questions in the questionnaire. Section A covered the demographic profile of respondents such as gender, age, education levels, income levels and patronage of Mamak restaurants. There were 40 items in section B which included the variables such as atmosphere, food quality, service quality and customer satisfaction. Data were collected by administering these 40 situational items. The survey questionnaires were divided into environment (12 items), food quality (7 items), service quality (15 items) and customer satisfaction (6 items) respectively. These questionnaires were adopted and adapted from a few studies (Bowden & Dagger, 2011; Namasivayam & Mattila, 2007; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1993; Namkung & Jang, 2007) by measuring the impact of environment, food quality and service quality of Mamak restaurant and customer satisfaction. Therefore, this instrument was considered reliable in measuring customer satisfaction based on the three factors. The respondents were required to select one answer based on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data which involved descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

There were 162 respondents, 56.8% and 43.2% of the respondents were males and females respectively. 12.3% of the respondents were below 20 years old and 64.8% of the respondents were aged between 21 to 25 years old. 72.8% of the respondents with degree qualification and 3.7% were primary/secondary level. 56.2% of the respondents earned below RM 1,000, followed by 24.1% earned between RM 1,000 - RM 3,000. 15% of respondents have income more than RM 5,000. 78% of the respondents preferred Mamak restaurant because of the influence of their friends and family. 62% of the respondents visited Mamak restaurant more than 10 times in a year; while 22% of the respondents visited Mamak restaurant less than 5 times in a year.

Table 1: Environment of Mamak Restaurant

Environments	Mean	SD
Interior design of restaurant make me feel good	3.01	0.85
Music plays in the restaurant entertaining me.	2.57	0.91
Mood of the restaurant is great.	3.40	0.84
Lighting of restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere	3.28	0.90
Comfortable temperature	3.06	1.03
Comfortable seats and easy to move around	3.35	1.02
Dining tables in good quality and comfortable	2.98	1.05
Dining areas are virtually attractive and clean	2.65	1.04
Good quality and clean disposable wares that reflect the overall theme and image.	3.12	1.09
The interior wall and floor matches the overall theme of the restaurant.	3.12	0.82
Layout and facilities aesthetics of restaurant are fun and unique.	2.95	0.90
The overall design is interesting.	2.91	0.95

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of environment of Mamak restaurant. The third criteria "Mood of the restaurant is great" scored the highest mean, followed by the 'Comfortable seats and easy to move around' and 'Lighting of restaurant creates a comfortable atmosphere'. "Music plays in the restaurant entertaining me" scored the lowest with a mean of 2.57.

Table 2: Food quality of Mamak restaurant

Food Quality	Mean	SD
The food is fresh	3.47	1.00
The temperature of the food is just right.	3.85	0.74
The food is tasty.	4.04	0.77
The food is attractive and tempting	3.85	0.84
The food is prepared hygienically	3.23	1.04
There are many food varieties to choose.	3.96	0.86
The food is consistent across cuisines.	3.62	0.97

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of food quality of Mamak restaurant. Among all of the criteria, "The food is tasty" scored the highest mean; whereas, "The food is prepared hygienically" scored the lowest mean. Equations should be numbered consecutively throughout the text.

Table 3: Service quality of Mamak restaurant

Service Quality	Mean	SD
I can trust employees of this restaurant.	3.27	0.74
This restaurant's employees know well their jobs to help customers.	3.46	0.81
This restaurant's employees get adequate support from this restaurant to do their jobs well	3.49	0.75
Employees of this restaurant know what my needs are.	3.31	0.84
This restaurant has my best interests at heart.	3.30	0.86
This restaurant has operating hours convenient to all their customers.	4.04	0.84
When this restaurant promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.	3.30	0.98
This restaurant keeps its records accurately.	3.24	0.85
This restaurant provides its services at the time it promises to do so.	3.47	0.90
This restaurant does tell consumers exactly when services will be performed.	3.19	0.91
This restaurant's employees are always willing to help customers.	3.48	0.93
This restaurant's employees respond to customer requests promptly.	3.50	0.81
This restaurant has up-to-date equipment.	3.15	0.94
This restaurant's physical facilities are visually appealing.	3.14	0.92
This restaurant's employees are well dressed and appear neat.	3.04	0.99

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of service quality of Mamak restaurant. The criteria "The restaurant has operating hours convenient to all their customers" scored the highest mean and "The restaurant's employees are well dressed and appear neat" scored the lowest mean.

Table 4: Customer satisfaction of Mamak restaurant

Satisfaction	Mean	SD
I am happy with the dining experience in the Mamak restaurant.	3.68	0.73
I am contented with the dining experience in the Mamak restaurant.	3.54	0.74
Going to the Mamak restaurant has been delightful.	3.57	0.92
I truly enjoy coming to the Mamak restaurant	4.56	0.86
My choice to dine out at this Mamak restaurant has been a wise one.	3.52	0.94
Overall I am satisfied with the dining experience in the Mamak restaurant.	3.74	0.75

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of patron satisfaction on Mamak restaurant. The criteria "I truly enjoy coming to the Mamak restaurant" scored the highest mean and "My choice to dine out at Mamak has been a wise one" scored the lowest mean.

Table 5: Reliability analysis for environment, food quality, service quality and customer satisfaction

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Alpha	Number of Items
Environment	0.90	12
Food Quality	0.81	7
Service Quality	0.91	15
Customer Satisfaction	0.84	6

Table 5 shows the reliability analysis that presents the value of Cronbach's Alpha. The fundamental rule for the reliability test is good reliability should be more than 0.7.

Table 6: Pearson correlation between environment, food quality, service quality and customer satisfaction

Variables	Customer Satisfaction
Environment	.22**
Food Quality	.52**
Service Quality	.47**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows that the outcome of correlations between independent variables - atmosphere, food quality and service quality with dependent - customer satisfaction of Mamak restaurant. The correlation coefficient for atmosphere was 0.222. Food quality with a correlation coefficient of 0.520. Service quality had a positive correlation coefficient of 0.474. All the three independent variables were positively correlated with Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction and significant as p-values were lower than 0.05.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.55a	.30	.29	.52

a. Predictors: (Constant), Servquality, Atmosphere, Foodquality

From the table above, the coefficient of correlation was 0.550 between the dependent and independent variables. The coefficient of determination was 0.303. The independent variables atmosphere, food quality and service quality explained 30.3% of the variation in customer satisfaction.

Table 8: Significance of the regressions model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.51	3	6.17	22.9	.000b
Residual	42.62	158	.27		
Total	61.13	161			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service quality, Atmosphere, Food quality

Table 8 shows that p-value was 0.00 and less than alpha value of 0.05. Hence, reject the null hypothesis and conclude that a significant portion of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the linear model.

Table 9: Multiple regressions between environment, food quality, service quality and customer satisfaction

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.552	5.45	.00
Environment	-.013	-.19	.85
Food Quality	.376	4.21	.00
Service Quality	.256	2.62	.01

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

Table 9 shows the coefficients for atmosphere, food quality and service quality versus Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. The variable - atmosphere was not significant with p-value more than 0.05; whereas food and service quality were significant with p-values less than 0.05. Overall satisfaction was linearly related to customer perception on food quality and service quality.

Table 10: Research results

Research Hypothesis	Results
H1: Environment has positive influences on customer satisfaction of Mamak restaurant.	Supported
H2: Food quality has positive influences on customer satisfaction of Mamak restaurant.	Supported
H3: Service quality has positive influences on customer satisfaction of Mamak	Supported
H4: The linearity between atmosphere, food quality and service quality of Mamak restaurant and customer satisfaction.	Supported

Table 10 shows that all the hypotheses were supported in this study. There was a positive relationship between environment, food quality and service quality and Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. However, Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction was linearly related to perception on food quality and service quality.

4. Implications and Conclusions

There are a few implications based on this study. Food quality and service quality are the most important variables in Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. Thus, Mamak restaurant operators can understand their core strength and improve their food and service quality indirectly. For instance, introducing more varieties of foods to cater for different types of customers. Besides, alternative healthier food such as less salt and oil in preparing

their food as people are more health conscious lately. The restaurant operators can improve their employee's attitude in order to increase customer satisfaction. For instance, introducing full-service restaurant, where waiters take food orders from customers seated at tables instead of self-service restaurant. Furthermore, Mamak restaurant operators need to reduce their serving time in order to increase their customer satisfaction.

This study explores the factors influencing Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. 78% of the respondents said that friends and family members influenced their selection of Mamak restaurants. Friends are the most influential factor in choosing Mamak restaurant. This is not a surprise in Malaysia as many Malaysians like to watch football matches at Mamak restaurants. 62% of the respondents visited Mamak restaurant for more than 10 times in a year. Mamak restaurant is considered a unique culture for all Malaysians. It has become one of the symbols that unites all Malaysians regardless its races and religions. Mamak restaurant is considered a typical culture for Malaysians and operates 24-hour service daily. There were three independent variables in this study namely atmosphere, food quality and service quality. "The food is tasty", "The restaurant has operating hours convenient to all of their customers" and "Mood of the restaurant is great" scored the highest means. Pearson correlation test indicated that environment, food quality and service quality were positively related with the Mamak restaurant customer satisfaction. However, multiple regression analysis showed that food quality and service quality were the two factors influenced restaurant customer satisfaction.

References

[1] Bitner, Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. Journal of Marketing, 54, 69-82, (1990).

[2] Bolton and Drew, A longitudinal analysis of the impact of service changes on customer attitudes. Journal of Marketing. 55, 1-9, (1991).

[3] Bowden and Dagger, To delight or not to delight? An investigation of loyalty formation in the restaurant industry. Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management. 20 (5), 501- 524, (2011)

[4] Countryman and Jang, The effects of atmospheric elements on customer impression: the case of hotel lobbies. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 18 (7), 534-545, (2006).

[5] Chow, Lau, Lo and Yun, Service quality in restaurant operations in China: decision- and experiential-oriented perspectives. International

[6] Ha and Jang, Effects of service quality and food quality: The moderating role of atmospherics in an ethnic restaurant segment. International Journal of Hospitality Management. 29 (3), 520-529, (2010).

[7] Ha and Jang, The effects of dining atmospherics on behavioral intentions through quality perception. Journal of Services Marketing. 26 (3), 204-215, (2012).

[8] Jangga, Sahari and Basir, Factors determining the level of satisfaction experienced by customers who visit family chain restaurants. International Conference on Business and Economic Research. 15 (1), 1-25, (2012).

[9] Kivela, Inbakaran and Reece, Consumer research in the restaurant environment, Part 1: A conceptual model of dining satisfaction and return patronage. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 11(5), 205-222, (1999).

[10] Kumar, Garg and Rahman, Influence of retail atmospherics on customer value in an emerging market. Great Lakes Herald.4 (1), 1-13, (2010).

[11] Matilla and Wirtz, Congruency of scent and music as a driver of in-store evaluations and behavior. Journal of Retailing. 77, 273-289, (2001).

[12] Namasivayam and Mattila, Accounting for the joint effects of the servicescape and service exchange on consumer's satisfaction evaluations. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research. 31 (1), 3-18, (2007).

[13] Namkung and Jang, Does food quality really matter in restaurant: its impact of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research. 31 (3), 387-410, (2007).

[14] Oliver, Processing of the satisfaction response in consumption: a suggested framework and research propositions. Journal of Customer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior.2, 1-6, (1989).

[15] Oliver, Satisfaction: A Behavioral Perspective on the Consumer. 1sted. New York: McGraw-Hill. (1997).

[16] Olsen, Comparative evaluation and the relationship between quality, satisfaction and repurchase loyalty. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. 30 (3), 240-249, (2002).

[17] Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, SERVQUAL: a multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. Journal of Retailing. 64, 12-37, (1988).

[18] Ramly, Ahmad and Ahmadin, Factors influencing Customers Patronizing Mamak Restaurants - A Survey in Shah Alam. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism. 1 (1), 10-21, (2004).

[19] Ryu, Lee and Kim, The influence of the quality of the physical environment, food and service on restaurant image, customer perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 24 (2), 200-223, (2012).

[20] Sulek & Hensley, The relative importance of food, atmosphere, and fairness of wait the case of a full-service restaurant. Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 45(3), 235-247, (2004).

[21] Susskind and Chan, How restaurant features affect check averages. Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly. 41 (6), 56-63, (2000).

[22] Taylor and Baker, An assessment of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the formation of consumers' purchase intentions. Journal of Retailing. 70 (2), 163-178, (1994).

[23] Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, The nature and determinants of customer expectations of service. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. 21, 1-12, (1993).